



## **Notes from Dr. Sook Wilkinson, Chairperson**

As we ushered in 2012, it has already been a busy year for MAPAAC. First, we spent a day at a Strategic Planning Retreat, reviewing our efforts from 2011 and developing new goals for 2012 in early February. Then, just before the Super Bowl, the now infamous ad by U.S. Senate candidate Pete Hoekstra surfaced. Soon after his ad aired on TV, whether or not related, a Sikh temple of worship was vandalized in Sterling Heights. We attended a recent Troy City Council meeting to request an apology and an explanation for condoning a man who, in his public comments, used an anti-Chinese slur ("Chicom") to refer to the government and the people of China. MAPAAC, with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, issued a press release on the ad and a Letter to the Editor on the City Council matter.

Many Asian American and Pacific Islander groups, national and local showed their disapproval and disgust with the Hoekstra ad. Due to their collective efforts, and those of others from a spectrum of diverse cultural, religious, ethnic and political groups, we are making some progress. The first website of the candidate, adorned with unflattering Chinese symbols, has been taken down. A coalition of civil rights leaders in Michigan also asked all political candidates to run respectful campaigns.

Let us remember that it was thirty years ago this June that Vincent Chin was murdered merely because he was Asian American. During the auto industry recession of 1982, while celebrating his upcoming marriage at a bar, Chin was mistaken for being Japanese, got involved in an altercation, and eventually was clubbed to death. MAPAAC is partnering with Asian American Citizens for Justice to arrange a fitting ceremony for Vincent Chin's 30th memorial.

Soon, we will celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in the State Capitol Rotunda. This year's program will include the survey results on the needs of our community, conducted by APIA-Vote Michigan. A visit to the Chamber of the House of Representatives in session will highlight the work of the lawmakers. All of you are invited to join us. Save the Date information is included in this newsletter.

To view the press release, please go to  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcr/hoekstrapress\\_375992\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcr/hoekstrapress_375992_7.pdf).

Some of MAPAAC's 2011 accomplishments are highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter. The Commissioners are proud to play a role in Governor Snyder's Global Michigan Initiative to revitalize Michigan.

## Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission Accomplishments 2011

Professional licensing and credentialing

A discussion between an auto parts supplier from India and Michigan Economic Development Corporation was initiated. The overseas investor is interested in setting up a stamping plant in Michigan that will employ 180 workers.

Discussion is in process with the Michigan Department of Agriculture to create a list of Michigan farmers wishing to export apples, blueberries and other fruits to India.

Community-based Entrepreneurship - an initiative to reenergize entrepreneurial spirit and business developments within Bangladeshi community

The US State Department invited a Commissioner to represent the Bangladeshi community on the Global Diaspora Forum

For the first time in the United States, ballots were provided in Hamtramck in Bengali

In May, the Commission hosted the annual Asian Pacific American Islander Heritage Month Celebration at the Capitol, featuring Governor Rick Snyder and Chair of President Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Daphne Kwok.

In supporting the Global Michigan Initiative, hosted an international student panel on the topic, "Michigan's International Students: Carving a Path to Success" to examine the challenges and opportunities faced by international students living, studying and working in Michigan.

### Passionate in Service – Meet the Leaders of MAPAAC



**Dr. H. Sook Wilkinson** is a licensed clinical psychologist who has practiced in Michigan for over 30 years. As an expert in the field of international adoption, she authored two books: *Birth is More than Once: The Inner World of Adopted Korean Children*, and *After the Morning Calm: Reflections of Korean Adoptees*. When Governor Granholm created the Governor's Advisory Council on Asian Pacific American Affairs in 2005, she appointed Wilkinson as its chair. In 2009, the legislature created a more permanent entity, the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (MAPAAC), and the Governor turned to her

again to chair the Commission. She feels humbled and privileged to have the opportunity to serve the state and the Asian Pacific American community. She is a member of the Board of Trustees at Northern Michigan University in Marquette and serves on many advisory boards of non-profit organizations.



**Roland Hwang** is an attorney with the State of Michigan. He is an adjunct instructor teaching Asian American History and Law at the University of Michigan. "It has been an honor to be a witness to the creation of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, and the body's transition from being an advisory council. The annual

APA Celebrations at the Capitol, the report on APA enrollments at state colleges, and our Commission's role in Global Michigan are examples of what makes me excited to be a Commissioner. I look forward this coming June to a significant remembrance upon the 30th Anniversary of the Vincent Chin case, a case that raised everyone's awareness about Asian Pacific American civil rights".



**Willie Dechavez** is the State Chairperson of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) Michigan and NaFFAA National Director for Development. He is the current PRO of the Filipino American Community Council of Michigan. He joined the Commission so he can truly represent his own Filipino American community and make a difference on the lives of people who belong in the minority group in mainstream America.



**Tsu-Yin Wu, Ph.D. RN.** Is a Professor and the PhD Program Director of Eastern Michigan University's School of Nursing and Director of the Healthy Asian Americans Project. "It's a privilege to serve with so many talented APA colleagues on this Commission". She feels that it is critical to continue to advocate and promote health in the APA community as she observes disparities in health outcomes and access to health care in the position as Director of the Healthy Asian Americans Project.



**Ramesh Verma** is also Commissioner of the Office of Services to the Aging, and a Trustee of the Novi City Library. He has been with MAPAAC since its inception. He is very active in coordinating meetings between legislators and the Commissioners.

**No photo available – Anand Kumar** is the Founder and President of [www.miindia.com](http://www.miindia.com), the Michigan Indian community web portal. Miindia.com is rated as one of the top ethnic portals in America, successfully engaging nearly every Asian Indian resident living in Michigan. Anand is humbled by the opportunity to serve as a MAPAAC Commissioner and looks forward to helping Michigan thrive as a destination of choice for immigrants.

**No photo available – Ehsan Taqbeem** is the Chairman, Bangladeshi American Public Affairs Committee, and an Advisor to APIA Vote Michigan. He initiated a community-based entrepreneurship to reenergize entrepreneurial spirit and business developments within the Bangladeshi community and participated in the Global Diaspora Forum organized by the US State Department and the US AID in Washington DC to represent the Bangladeshi community. As Chair of the Business Development Committee, he looks forward to improving the lives of

APIA through community-based entrepreneurship.



**Connie Dang** is Vice Chair of MAPAAC. She is Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs at Grand Valley State University. She also serves as Co-Chair of the Uniting Communities Committee of the Global Michigan Initiative. Connie accepted the gubernatorial appointment to join MAPAAC because she believes that for Michigan to succeed in the knowledge-based global economy, every citizen in its communities needs to be empowered and validated and ready to contribute to the vitality of the state.

**No photo available – Nasim Ansari** lives in Kalamazoo. In 1999 he was first elected to the Portage City Council, and is currently serving his fifth term as a Kalamazoo County Commissioner. What impresses him the most about the MAPAAC are the sincere, hardworking and dedicated Commissioners.



**Tack Yong Kim** is Publisher, The Michigan Korean Weekly and founder of [www.michigankoreans.com](http://www.michigankoreans.com); President, M2M (Move 2 Michigan) and the Secretary of MAPAAC. He also served as a Co-Chair of the Media Committee of the Global Michigan Initiative. He believes the Asian community should contribute for the better future of Michigan.

## Full List of MAPAAC Commissioners

H. Sook Wilkinson, PhD  
Connie M. Dang  
Tack Yong Kim  
Nasim H. Ansari  
Lawrence G. (L.G.) Almeda  
Mamatha Chamarthi  
Willie D. Dechavez  
Hannah Feikema  
Mumtaz P. Haque  
Roland Hwang  
Anand Kumar  
Guozhen Lu  
Ernestina DeLos Santos-Mac  
Marilyn Nagano Schlieff  
Jeffrey Vang, PharmD  
Ramesh Verma  
Les Wong  
Peter Wong, CPA  
Clyde Wu, MD, FACC  
Tsu-Yin Wu, PhD

## **Save the Date! May 22, 2012 – Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration**

The 10th Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration will take place in the Capitol Rotunda in Lansing on May 22.

The event is hosted by the Michigan Asian Pacific Affairs Commission (MAPAAC), and supported by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and State Senator Hoon-Yung Hopgood. The Celebration will begin at 3:30 pm with a guest speaker and a few cultural performances.

Last year, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder attended the celebration. He congratulated those gathered and acknowledged the many contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to Michigan's progress. Chairperson Daphne Kwok of the President's Advisory Commission was the keynote speaker.

MAPAAC Chairperson Sook Wilkinson said, "One of MAPAAC's goals is to promote and share the Asian American and Pacific Islander culture with other ethnic communities in Michigan. The celebration in Lansing, open to all, is an ideal event to do just that."

For more information about the Celebration, please email Willie D. Dechavez, Event Chairperson, at: [misterwd2001@aol.com](mailto:misterwd2001@aol.com).

Our website: [www.michigan.gov/MAPAAC](http://www.michigan.gov/MAPAAC)

To contact us or unsubscribe, please email [MiAPACCommission@gmail.com](mailto:MiAPACCommission@gmail.com)

